

# The Rail-Trail Movement: A Snapshot of National Progress

Kentucky Bicycle and Bikeway Commission Annual Meeting Jeffrey Ciabotti, VP for Trail Development Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

October 29, 2010

#### **Presentation Outline**

- I. RTC and the National Trails Movement
- II. Benefits of Rail-Trails
- III. Case Study: Trail Town Program—Great Allegheny Passage
- IV. Kentucky Rails-to-Trails Council (Keith Lovan)
- V. Q & A

### Our Evolving Focus: Connected Systems / Multiple Benefits / Access

#### In the Beginning:

- Single Rail-Trails
- Rural Areas
- Recreation & Environment

#### Today:

- Trail Systems
- Rural, Suburban, Urban
- Recreation, Environment, Transportation, Health, Equity

## Looking Back, Looking Ahead

#### Past success:

- 1986: 250 miles of open rail-trail
- 2010: 19,800 miles of open rail-trail

#### Future goal: Our BHAG

By 2020, 90 percent of Americans will live within three miles of a local trail system.

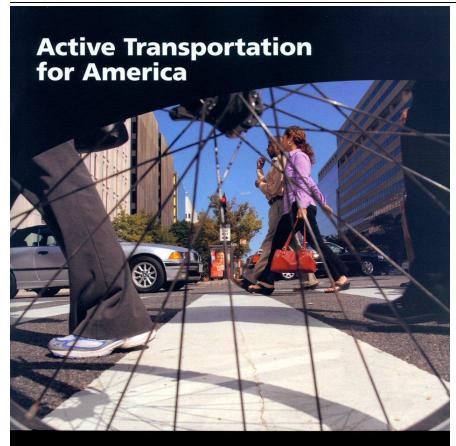
### Programmatic Focus

 Policy Advocacy – Campaign for Active Transportation / ACT act

 Trail Development – Catalyzing Local Trail Development / Urban Pathways Initiative

3. Increasing Awareness/Use – TrailLink.com

## Campaign for Active Transportation



The Case for Increased Federal Investment in Bicycling and Walking

The Case for Increased Federal Investment in Bicycling and Walking





# UPI: Beyond the Trail and into the Community











#### **Urban Pathways Initiative**

beyond the trail and into the community

#### WHAT ARE URBAN PATHWAYS?

Shared-use pathways go by many names, including bikeways, trails and greenways. They are open to users such as pedestrians, cyclists and inline skaters. What these pathways have in common is the healthy recreation and active transportation options they bring to their communities.

#### WHY CITIES? WHY URBAN PATHWAYS?

The active transportation and recreation options provided by trails are not always available to urban communities. Many of these neighborhoods face the challenges of obesity, congestion and scarcity of open space. Urban pathways are part of the solution. They provide opportunities for healthier living, which in turn effect positive change in neighborhoods where the demand for improved health and community empowerment is greatest.

#### ABOUT RAILS-TO-TRAILS CONSERVANCY

The mission of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is to create a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors to build healthier places for healthier people. Since opening in 1986, RTC has assisted communities and advocates in building more than 15,000 miles of rail-trail. By 2020, RTC wants to see 90 percent of Americans living within three miles of a rail-trail or connecting corridor. Enhancing and promoting trail use in urban areas is vital to achieving this goal.

Leadership funding from The Kresge Foundation has allowed RTC to craft core components of the Urban Pathways Initiative: community-based project work with local parmers, and creation of a national learning network for advocates and professionals dedicated to urban pathways.

#### PROJECT WORK

RTC staff provides in-depth technical assistance by engaging with local partners to identify and implement improvements that enhance access and foster community ownership of existing trails. This work expands upon RTC's traditional programmatic focus on trail building by encouraging trail use in urban communities. Funding from The Kresge Foundation allows RTC to expand its existing work in Washington, D.C., Camden, N.J., and Jacksonville, Fla., and to engage in work in Compton, Calif., New Orleans, La., Springfield, Mass., and Cleveland, Ohio.

#### NATIONAL LEARNING NETWORK

The Urban Pathways Initiative reaches beyond the select cities receiving substantial on-the-ground support from RTC. An online and in-person network of case studies, resources, workshops and discussion threads allows advocates and professionals from cities of all sizes nationwide to learn from each other by engaging in a dialogue about challenges and successes. This content will be moderated by RTC staff and open to all who wish to contribute on www.railstotrails.

org. The national learning network provides a foundation for RTC reports on innovative practices that foster community involvement in urban pathway development.

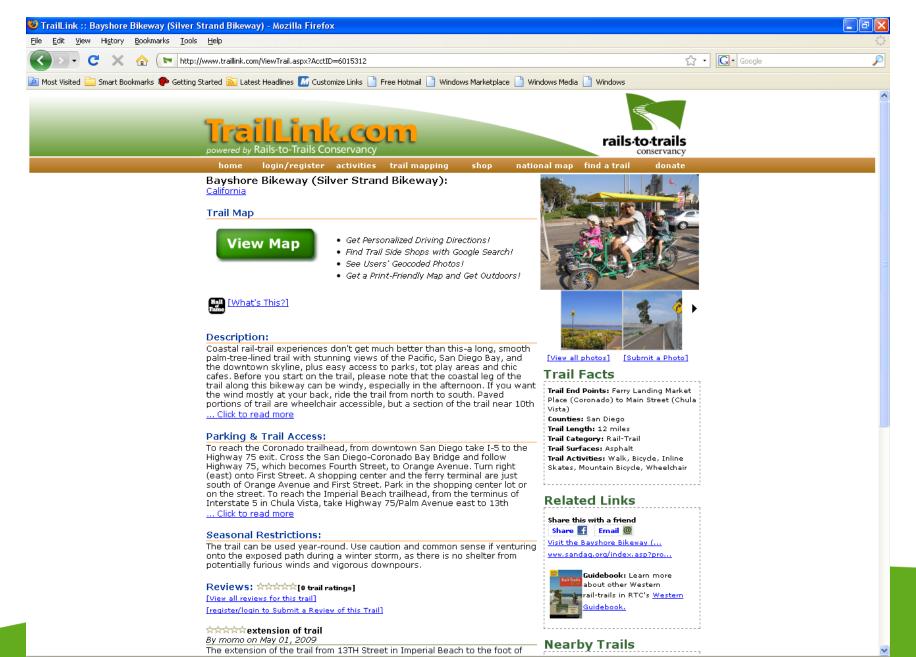
For more Information, contact: Stephen Miller at 202.974.5123, or stephen@railstotrails.org

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Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with headquarters in Washington, D.C., and offices in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and California, and Florida. For more information visit www.railstotrails.org.



### TrailLink.com



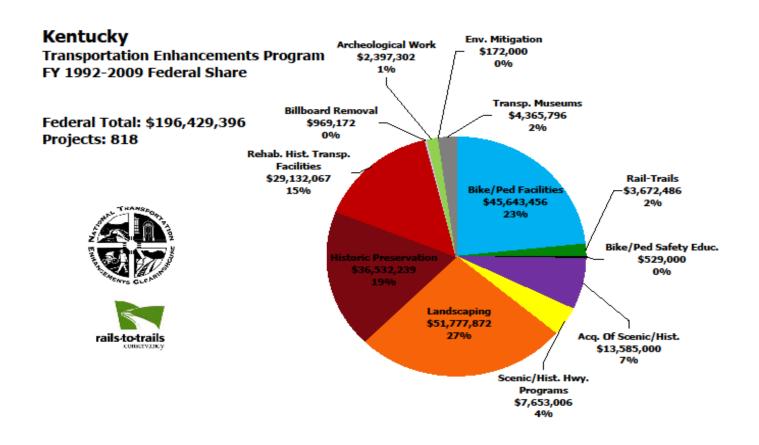
### **National Trends**

- Policy and Politics
  - -- Inside the Potomac Haze
  - -- Outside the Potomac Haze
- Research
  - -- Gaps Analysis
  - -- Health Benefits
- Trail Building
  - -- Systems Development
  - -- Local Demand
  - -- Rails-with-Trails

### State Rail-Trail Comparisons

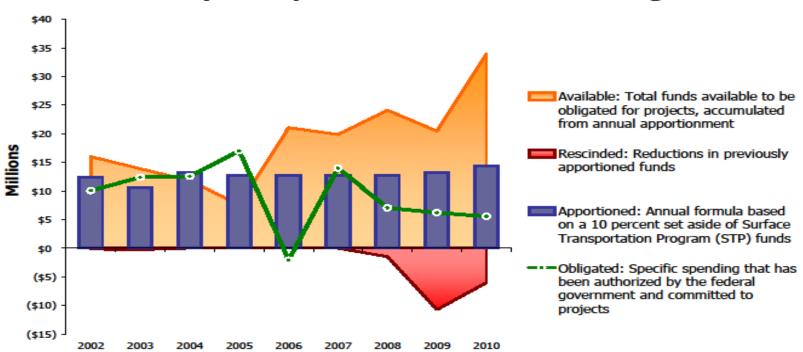
	# of Open Trails	Mileage	# of Project Trails	Mileage
ОН	80	721.97	35	250.71
IL	61	590.98	13	143.37
VA	33	240.83	11	53.7
KY	11	27.5	16	217.24

# Kentucky TE Program FY 1992-2009 Federal Share



# Kentucky TE Program

#### Kentucky Transportation Enhancements Program



# Transportation

Trails provide a safe, affordable, alternative mode of transportation



North River Trail, Little Rock, AR

History Benefits Acquisition Implementation Design

# Environmental



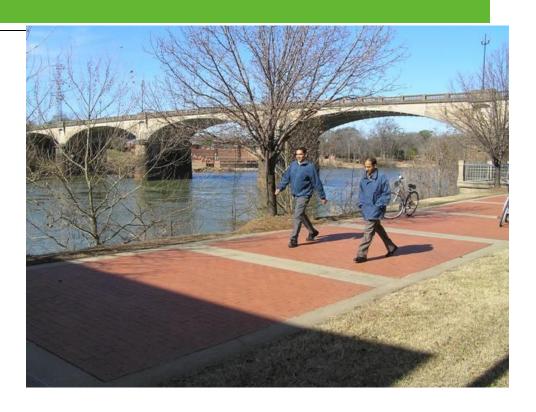


Old Railroad Bed Trail, Alabama
(photo by Dennis Keim, dk-studio, Huntsville, AL)

# Health – Physical Activity

Trails provide an opportunity for regular physical activity

People who reported using trails at least once a week were twice as likely to meet physical activity recommendations that people who reported never or rarely using trails. **11** 



History Benefits Acquisition Implementation Design

## **Economic Benefits**



Glen Rock Mill Inn - Heritage Rail Trail, Pennsylvania

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quisition

Implementation

Design

Pennsylvania Greenway Sojourn participants spent \$90,000 in 6 days





Aroostook County Maine has more than 100 miles of interconnected rail trails

History Benefits Acquisition Implementation Design

Trails foster new business formation and business revitalization.











"If not for the trail, I don't know if I would have enough business to make this work...There's a lot happening here now with the trail. People are fixing up houses and starting businesses. Things are catching on."

- Bed-and-Breakfast owner on a trail near Confluence, PA





Trails can serve as a catalyst for urban revitalization...

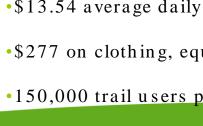




#### Great Allegheny Passage -Cumberland, MD to Pittsburgh, PA – 135 miles

- •750,000 user visits annually
- •\$3.6 million estimated spending on bikes and equipment
- •\$3.7 million estimated spending on consumables and lodging

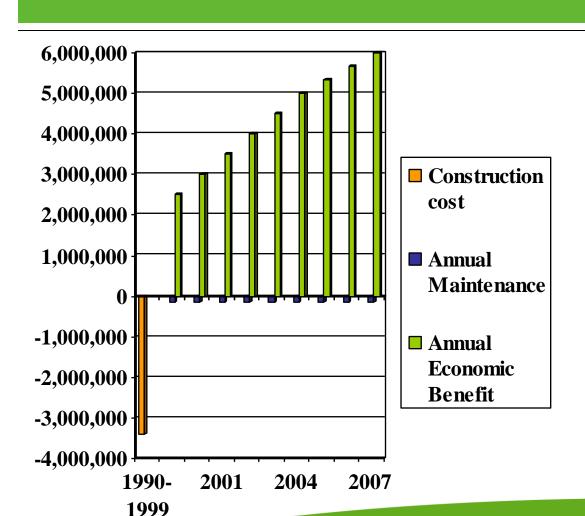






#### Ohio's Little Miami Scenic Trail (1999)

- •\$13.54 average daily on food and transportation
- •\$277 on clothing, equipment, accessories
- •150,000 trail users per year



Based upon
estimates
of trail user
spending and
annual number of
trail user visits, the
Heritage Rail Trail
has been a good
investment of
federal, state and
local dollars

History Benefits Acquisition Implementation Design

### **Trail Towns**



# Healthier Places for Healthier People



# www.railstotrails.org

